

DOWNTOWN AUSTIN ALLIANCE  
Draft Service Plan and Budget FY 2007-2008  
May 1, 2007-April 30, 2008

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## INTRODUCTION

The Austin DMO, Inc was chartered in May 1992. The City Council created the Downtown Austin Public Improvement District in April 1993 and contracted with the DMO in August 1993 to provide services to this District. In September 1995, the Austin DMO, Inc changed its name to the Downtown Austin Alliance.

During FY 2007-2008, the Downtown Austin Alliance will move forward in accordance with its mission to protect and strengthen the business, cultural, arts and entertainment environment of Downtown Austin, to provide services to increase the quality of life for people who live, work, and play in Downtown, to communicate the concerns of the Downtown community to local and state entities, and to support the constructive initiatives on issues of public policy that affect the community.

## SERVICE PLAN

In this document, the Downtown Austin Alliance's Draft FY 2007-2008 Service Plan and Budget is outlined. The Alliance's FY 2007-2008 P I D fund budget totaling \$2,023,061 is based on the projected assessment revenues as well as a City of Austin contribution. It does not reflect potential carryover funds from the current year, potential voluntary membership dues, fund-raising, or other miscellaneous revenue.

By April 2007, the Alliance's Board of Directors will develop a detailed program budget for the fiscal year that starts May 1, 2007. The Draft FY 2007-2008 budget is shown below.

<b>FY 2007-2008 Preliminary Budget</b>	<b>\$610,750</b>	<b>30.19%</b>
Security		
Maintenance	165,764	8.19%
Membership	116,000	5.73%
Economic Development	180,000	8.90%
Streetscapes & Transportation	105,000	5.19%
Arts, Entertainment & Marketing	536,547	26.52%
Communication	117,000	5.78%
Parks & Community Support	34,000	1.68%
Administration	158,000	7.81%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,023,061</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS**

### **I Security - \$610,750 or 30.19%**

The Downtown Austin Alliance promotes a safe downtown with the Austin Downtown Rangers program and by working closely with the Austin Police Department, Community Court, City of Austin, and Travis County on a variety of issues. Security is the top priority of the Downtown community and will continue to be the Alliance's main focus.

Last fiscal year, the Alliance grant funded \$280,000 to the City for Downtown Ranger program with eight full-time and one part-time Ranger. The Alliance also grant funded \$112,000 to the City for additional Parks Patrol personnel. The Alliance co-funded the Downtown Area Assistant District Attorney's salary with grant of \$20,000 to Travis County District Attorney's office. On average, the Downtown Rangers assist 44 individuals per month who are locked out of their vehicles and more than 810 citizens with directions or information about downtown, checked welfare on 397 individuals and removed 528 handbills from public property. Staff continued to actively participate in the District Attorney's Re-entry Roundtable program. This year (2006), Alliance Program Director Bill Brice is the chair of the Travis County Re-Entry Round Table Program.

### **II Maintenance - 165,764 or 8.19%**

The Alliance will continue its litter removal and private property graffiti removal programs. The Alliance also provides monthly sidewalk power washing on Congress Avenue. The Alliance works hard to have a prompt graffiti removal response time. Working with property owners, the Alliance has improved the "graffiti resistance" of Downtown properties. The Alliance also funds a supervisor for the weekend and afternoon Community Service Restitution program of the Community Court.

Last fiscal year, the Alliance allocated \$90,000 for four full-time maintenance crew members to provide litter pickup seven days a week. This crew also provides sidewalk power washing three days a week, and graffiti removal on ongoing bases. Last fiscal year, the Alliance maintenance crew removed a total of 3033 graffiti tags. Of those, 2498 were removed from public right-of-way, and 535 were removed from private property.

### **III Membership - \$116,000 or 5.73%**

Membership programs include informative Issues & Eggs breakfasts, the Luncheon & Speakers Series, the Alliance's annual meeting, and membership recruitment and development. The membership committee also has responsibility for the holiday decorations and programs, and the Downtown IMPACT Awards.

Last fiscal year, DAA held 7 Issues and Eggs breakfasts.

May - District Attorney Ronnie Earl & Assistant DA David Laibovitz gave an update on the Re-Entry program.

June - Envision Central Texas (ECT) Executive Director Sally Campbell reviewed the implementation phase of ECT's Regional Plan.

August - Consultant Midge McCauley with Economics Research Associates presented

the results of the retail study regarding retail on Congress Avenue

November - Anne Elizabeth Wynn and Ginny Sanders gave a presentation in preparation for First Night Austin

January - Mike Berry, president of the Austin Toros basketball gave a presentation, on the team and discussed their potential economic impact on downtown

February - Representatives from the Austin Police Department discussed advancements in addressing public order in downtown

March - Glynn Meek, CEO of the World Conference of Information Technology discussed the importance of the upcoming WCIT 2006 Conference and how the business community could become involved

Biannual Survey - Marie Crane & Associates conducted biannual survey and the total cost was \$30,500. In addition to the basic survey of downtown property owners, business owners and employees, an additional category of survey respondents, i.e. nearby residents was added for the first time. All four stakeholder groups reported positive views about Downtown Austin, characterizing Downtown Austin as "the heart of the city," "a community," and an "exciting," "inviting," and "friendly place" (M. Crane & Associates, Inc., Assessments of Downtown Austin and the Downtown Austin Alliance, Biannual Tracking Survey Report, October 6, 2005)

Annual Meeting - On October 19, 2005 the Alliance held its Annual Membership meeting in conjunction with Mayor Will Wynn's State of Downtown Address and luncheon

#### IV Economic Development - \$180,000 or 89%

This program promotes business development and the positive growth of retail and residential uses in Downtown. The Downtown Austin Alliance website provides detailed information for potential investors and employers. The Economic Development Committee works closely with area private sector entities to address and advocate Downtown development issues with local and state governments. A major Alliance initiative will be participating with the City to implement ERA's recommendations from the Downtown Retail Development Strategy Study, including hiring a retail recruiter and producing marketing materials. The role of the retail recruiter has been expanded to include not only Congress Avenue, but also Sixth Street from IH-35 to Lamar. Working with consulting firm ERA, a retail mix strategy will be identified for Sixth Street. The goal of this for W. 6th St will be to capitalize on the street's existing entertainment brand.

Specific expenses to implement the Retail Development Strategy during the past year are as follows:

Collateral Material /Retail Development Packet - \$10,000

Retail Recruiter Salary - \$43,000

Retail Consultant (Economics Research Associates) - \$61,000

Contribution to Pecan Street Owners Association - \$20,000

V Streetscapes & Transportation - \$105,000 or 5.19%

Streetscapes and Transportation covers all issues and programs for Downtown access, mobility, and parking. The Alliance works with a variety of partners in planning the future of Downtown's transportation infrastructure. Current projects include working with Capital Metro on transit planning, including the downtown connector system. Streetscapes and Transportation staff also works closely with City of Austin staff on Great Streets, the conversion of Cesar Chavez and other transit projects. The Alliance assists the City in communicating with affected property owners during street reconstruction project such as 2<sup>nd</sup> street, the upcoming Brazos and Colorado projects and weekly street-closing announcements. A Wayfinding Task Force has been formed to look at the development of a coordinated wayfinding system for downtown.

VI Arts, Entertainment & Marketing - \$536,547 or 26.52%

Marketing downtown, as an arts, cultural, entertainment and visitor destination. Current projects include reprinting the Downtown tear-off map, update and maintain the Alliance's website (downtownaustin.com) as needed. This web site is designed to be the one stop source for information on Downtown Austin - it is currently receiving over 7,000 visits per day with searches for information about downtown events or doing business downtown. Also, the third season of the multi-EMMY® winning television series DOWNTOWN will air during the late spring/summer of '07. DOWNTOWN is a co-production of the Downtown Austin Alliance, Action Figure and KLRU, Austin's PBS station. Additional "next generation" media/communication ideas are in the formative stages, but may include using additional technologies such as podcasts, webcasts and RSS feeds of information about DOWNTOWN and events taking place downtown.

The Alliance spent \$320,000 on production of the first television series DOWNTOWN. Sponsorships in the amount of \$23,000 were contributed to various Downtown community events and organizations such as Austin Farmers Market (\$5000), the Austin Fine Arts Festival (\$3000), the Urban League of Austin's Housing Repair Program for a special matching fund challenge grant (\$4050), and other community events with funds specifically earmarked to help market their events.

VI Communications - \$117,000 or 5.78%

The Alliance distributes a print newsletter of organizational and downtown news approximately three times per year. In addition to this, the Alliance also produces a weekly web-based electronic newsletter called "This Week in Downtown" which is distributed on Wednesday evening with a listing of downtown events for the week running Thursday through the following Wednesday. This has been developed to coordinate with the Alliance's very popular web site events calendar. The format and delivery method of the weekly electronic newsletter is in the process of being redesigned for use by a web-based electronic marketing system to avoid issues of being labeled as spam, to allow for better subscription capabilities and to have better control and tracking of newsletter flow.

The Alliance made a major investment in revamping the web site and delivering up-to-date information to its constituency. The Alliance's web site remains one of its best methods of communication. Hits to the web site have now risen to over 7,000 visits per day. The increase in traffic to the site from August 2005 to August 2006 is up by almost 130%. Since July of 2005 there have been more than 6.5 million visits to the web site. Information contained on this site includes downtown events, a downtown directory, information on downtown living, doing business downtown, downtown retail development, and many helpful links including links to the City of Austin's Economic Development information links.

In addition to staff time, the Alliance also spent \$38,000 on to produce other communication items including their newsletters, and annual report. Alliance staff also provides regular information to the media and to the public upon request.

VII Community Support - \$34,000 or 1.68%

The Alliance leverages its funds through partnerships with other nonprofit organizations. Working with the Austin Parks Foundation and PARD the Alliance works to help revitalize Republic Square and other downtown historic parks. One of the major steps taken was to provide successful programming of Republic Square Park—turning this park into a vibrant urban space. The Republic Square Partnership has also been formed to work with the Government Services Administration as the new Federal Courthouse is developed. This group is coordinating the redesign of Republic Square with the new design of the Federal Courthouse. In addition, the Alliance's Park Committee has undertaken a full inventory of downtown parks and green spaces following the example of Partnership for Public Spaces. In the next year, work priorities will be established based on this assessment.

Last fiscal year, the Alliance provided a grant \$25,881 to Austin Parks Foundation to continue programming in the downtown parks. The Alliance also provides community support in the form of arts and entertainment sponsorships (see Arts & Entertainment for specific amount). In addition to certain pre-specified sponsorships awarded at the time of the budgeting process, other sponsorships are awarded throughout the fiscal year based on established criteria, on a first come, first served basis. These funds are to be used for marketing purposes only.

IX Administration - \$158,000 or 7.81% Program expenses include overhead charges allocated in proportion to staff time.

X Reserve Funds

The Board has not allocated a reserve in the FY 2007-2008 budget because of adequate existing reserves carried forward from prior years.

**SUMMARY**

In its first thirteen years, the Alliance has launched an ambitious array of Downtown programs. As a result, Downtown Austin is safer, cleaner, and more fun than before. The proposed FY 2007-2008 Service Plan and Budget will continue this record of achievement.